

Isthmian	Steel Chemist	Period:	Modern
Name:			
Gross Tonnage:	8,094	Net:	4,652
Dimensions:	492' 0" x 69' 7" x 29' 5"	MC Type:	C3-S-A2
Builder:	Ingalls Shipbuilding Corp.	Hull #	333
	Pascagoula, MS	USMC Hull #	428
		Date of Build:	1943
		Delivered:	9/11/43
Engines:	2 Steam Turbines DR Geared to Single Screwed Shaft	Engine Builder:	Westinghouse Electric & Mfg. Co.
			Pittsburgh, PA
Navigation:	DF, ESD, GC, RDR, RT	Decks, etc.:	2 Decks & Open Shelter Deck
Began Isthmian Service:	1947	Ended Isthmian Service:	1971

----- Vessel History -----

Date	Vessel #	Vessel Name	Vessel Owner	Call Ltrs	Home Port	Flag
1943	247255	<i>Sea Dolphin (I)</i>	US War Shipping Administration	ANLD	New Orleans	USWB
1943	APA 48	<i>USS Leon</i>	US Navy, as Combat Loaded Transport	AOVP	-----	US
1946	247255	<i>Sea Dolphin (I)</i>	US Maritime Commission	ANLD	New Orleans	US
1947	252037	<i>Steel Chemist</i>	Isthmian Lines, Inc. New York	KRLV	New York	US

Events:

10/3/42: Renamed Leon (3).
2/1/43: Redesignated APA-48.
2/6/43: Laid down by Ingalls Shipbuilding, Pascagoula, MS.
6/19/43: Launched, sponsored by Mrs. Earl K. Hammett.
9/11/43: Commissioned for transfer to Bethlehem Steel Shipyard, Brooklyn, NY, for conversion.
9/27/43: Decommissioned.

2/12/44: Recommissioned, Capt. Bruce B. Adell in command.
3/7/46: Decommissioned Chickasaw, AL, receiving 4 Battle Stars.
4/2/46: Transferred to U.S. Maritime Commission.
1946: Conversion contract awarded to Waterman Steamship Co. Shipyard, Mobile, AL, at a cost of \$525,216.
1947: Sold to Isthmian SS Co.
4/10/49: On voyage from Hong Kong to New York, in the early morning in dense fog, ashore at San Nicholas Island, Santa Barbara Channel with a cargo of sugar and 10 passengers. All double bottom tanks flooded.
4/12/49: Passengers taken off vessel by the Coast Guard.
4/13/49: Began offloading cargo to barges and sugar overboard. Deck cracked in way of #3 Hold.
4/15/49: Refloated.
7/2/49: Sailed Los Angeles to New York.
1/50: Hit dock. Plate frame and tank damage; repairs cost \$3,409.
8/23/50: Hit dock; plate, frame and tank damage.
6/51: Suffered heavy weather damage, voyage Calcutta to Mobile; rudder and fittings damaged.
7/9/51: Hit submerged object; fit spare propeller and draw shaft.
6/2 - 6/5/51: Heavy weather on voyage Calcutta to Mobile. Repair rudder, partially renew deck fittings and repair sundry damages.
7/9/51: Struck submerged object. Repair propeller, fit spare, draw and test shaft, and rewood bushes at Galveston.
8/23/51: Struck dock at New York. Renew 1 plate, partially renew frames, steam, clean and test tanks.
5/16/53: On voyage Singapore and New York to Baltimore, morning collision in Delaware Bay 5 miles from Overfalls Light Vessel with SS MARINE TRADER from Baltimore. MARINE TRADER holed on starboard side forward and bridge damaged. STEEL CHEMIST had a 6 foot gash on side at the 31 foot mark. STEEL CHEMIST continues and arrives in Baltimore.
5/18/53: MARINE TRADER docked at Girard Point in the morning.
5/25/53: In reply to London, Lloyd's Agents at Baltimore write STEEL CHEMIST had plating cut over a length of 6 foot at about the 31 foot mark and in now in drydock undergoing repairs.
7/8/53: From collision with MARINE TRADER 5/16/53, Stem bar and 24 plates renew, frames and beams partially renew, together with sundry damages; repairs and drydocking at Baltimore.
4/18/55: Propeller hit submerged object between Long Beach and San Francisco.
4/26/55: From San Francisco, voyage Baltimore for Manila, after propeller allegedly hit submerged object, Engineer reported excessive vibration in reduction gears. Exam of propeller revealed 2 blades damaged, thereafter endeavored to fair afloat, which failed to reduce the vibration, therefore vessel drydocked and changed propeller. Tailshaft also found fractured on both sides of keyway. Exam of gears revealed misalignment and excessive wear on high pressure and low pressure high speed and low pressure low speed pinions, which were installed new at Baltimore in March prior to commencement of current voyage. Owners feel gear adjustment unnecessary. Surveyor attending full power trials on completion of above repairs for observation of gears.
4/29/55: Left San Francisco for Manila.
6/27/55: From low pressure damage 2/19/54, renew 3 rows of rotor blades, 4 rows of casing blades and sealing strips, together with sundry damages and removals; repairs at Baltimore.
8/18/55: Damage to main propulsion gears discovered 1/1/55, renew low pressure 1st reduction pinion and gear and 2nd reduction pinion and high pressure reduction pinion, 1 bearing remetal, 2nd reduction gear teeth dress, lubricating oil system clean, oil renew, together with sundry damages and removals; repairs at Baltimore.
6/16/56: STEEL CHEMIST, New York for Hawaiian Islands, lost rudder during storm in morning while anchored off Kaighn Point, Delaware River. Vessel being towed to Baltimore for repairs.
7/16/56: From striking river bank 6/16/56, rudder, upper stock of rudder and 3 sections of stern frame renew, propeller recondition, tailshaft draw for examination, together with sundry damages and extensive removals; drydocking and repairs at Baltimore.
7/18/56: Left Baltimore for Houston.
2/25/58: Damaged alleged sustained to main propulsion gears in consequence of high pressure low speed pinion teeth failure discovered, stated resultant upon stranding off California on 4/10/49. Renew high pressure low speed gear assembly, bull gear and low pressure low speed gear teeth examine and dress, bearings examine, lubricating oil system clean, oil renew, together with sundry damages and extensive removals. Repairs completed at Baltimore. Surveyor does not consider that the teeth failure was resultant upon stranding, as the gears were fully examined at the time of repairs, also have been periodically examined by classification surveyors since that time, with no defects noted. A metallurgist's report has been requested in order to establish the cause of the failure.
5/16/61: STEEL CHEMIST damaged in consequence of one blade and section of shrouding breaking off the last wheel on the ahead stage of the low pressure turbine rotor, striking and cutting the main condenser tubes and flooding the condenser while on passage from Trincomali to Djibouti.

9/19/61: In consequence of damage sustained 5/16/61: Westinghouse low pressure turbine disconnect, spare rotor install, stationary blade rings remove and upper and lower halves of turbine casing, send to makers, clean and Magnaflux, seals renew and reinstall. Main condenser condenser heads remove, nine tubes renew, condenser clean, together with sundry damages and removals. Repairs completed at Houston, Texas, overtime being worked.

6/14/62: From Palembang, survey held on board STEEL CHEMIST, from Baltimore. Two holes found in No. 4 hatch 'tween deck, one on port side and one on the starboard side. The holes were found after discharge of cargo which had filled the hatch and covered the plates. The damage was alleged caused by stevedores.

8/62: Damage to low pressure turbine rotor in consequence of carbon packing being incorrectly fitted while undergoing repairs at Chester, PA.

7/13/64: Grounded at the West Jetty of South Pass Mississippi while on passage from Mobile to New Orleans in partially loaded condition.

8/18/64: From New York: From damage alleged sustained 7/13/63 in consequence of grounding: Ten shell plates renew, four plates partially renew and five plates fair, internals straighten and partially renew, propeller recondition, spare propeller install, tailshaft draw for examination, stern tube rewood, sea chests and sea valves overhaul, main condenser clean, bilge keel partially renew, tanks steam, clean and test, together with sundry damages and removals. Repairs partially completed and partially deferred.

1/3/65: At Honolulu: Damage discovered to low pressure turbine rotor, alleged to occur August 1962.

4/8/65: From Honolulu: Longshoreman continued economic sanctions today against Alabama made goods on board steamer STEEL CHEMIST. The International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union announced yesterday that the Alabama products would not be unloaded at Honolulu, where the ship is berthed. The Longshoremen's stand, it is reported, is part of nationwide efforts to achieve total civil rights for all residents of Alabama. The ship is carrying 500 tons of non-perishable cargo from Mobile, Alabama.

4/13/65: STEEL CHEMIST left Honolulu for Hilo.

1/4/66: From New York: From damage alleged sustained during August 1962, to low pressure turbine rotor in consequence of carbon packing being allegedly incorrectly fitted while undergoing repairs at Chester, PA and discovered 1/3/65 at Honolulu: Low pressure rotor journal build up, grind and rebalance, forward bearing remetal and machine, inner gland case locating dowel renew and gland case reweld, carbon packing renew, together with sundry damages and removals; repairs completed. The top half gland housing locating dowel was found set over and compressed and the gland housing also out of position radically. From damage alleged sustained 7/13/64 in consequence of grounding on the west bank of South Pass Jetty, Mississippi River, while on passage from Mobile to New Orleans, in partially loaded condition: Twelve port side shell plates renew, three partially renew and three fair, internals straighten and partially renew, tanks steam, clean and test, together with sundry damages and removals; repairs completed.

1/11/67: Damage to stern discovered on dry dock at Baltimore.

1/25/67: From New York: From damage alleged sustained in consequence of a cause at present unknown but discovered on dry dock at Baltimore on 1/11/67: Fracture in stern frame back post cut out and build up solid with electric welding, rudder lift for access, together with sundry damages and removals; repairs completed.

6/16/67: At Bangkok: Steamer STEEL CHEMIST struck wharf and cargo boats on undocking. While manoeuvring in turning basin, stated struck and sank one sand barge, from which two persons lost. One body since recovered.

12/24/69: Damage alleged sustained in consequence of failure of port boiler while vessel was en route from Seattle and Oakland, CA to Panama and Baltimore, loaded.

1/27/70: From New York: Steamer STEEL CHEMIST, Baltimore for North Africa, loaded, reported disabled in position Lat. 36 32 N, Long. 59 17 W, 360 miles north-east of Bermuda, with main engine throttle valve problem, which crew attempting to rectify. Owners investigating tug service.

1/28/70: From New York: Steamer STEEL CHEMIST: Tug GRACE MCALLISTER dispatched from New York at 2 AM 1/28/70, but owners remain hopeful crew will be able to effect repairs. (Later) Owners report throttle valve repaired and STEEL CHEMIST under way continuing on passage and tug ordered to return to base, New York. Steamer STEEL CHEMIST reported under way at 4 PM, local time. Tug GRACE MCALLISTER, which was dispatched from New York to assist is returning.

1/29/70: From New York: From damage alleged sustained 12/24/69 in consequence of port boiler failure: Port boiler back wall, side wall and roof tubes to be renewed, superheat elements and carrier plates to be renewed and refractory and insulation to be removed for access and later renewed, starboard boiler casing to be partially renewed in two locations, both boilers to be hydrostatically tested on completion of repairs and emergency generator overhaul, together with sundry damages and removals; repairs being completed.

7/4/71: Alleged sustained damage in consequence of crew negligence in operation of main boilers.

7/12/71: Permanent repairs deferred to main boilers damaged in consequence of alleged crew negligence, temporary repairs carried out at Baltimore.

7/30/71: From New York: Steamer STEEL CHEMIST alleged sustained damage on July 4, 1971 in consequence of alleged crew negligence as a result of low water in the port boiler while steaming at Norfolk. Repairs deferred. Preparation for survey work and preparation for possible repairs at this time

were carried out at Norfolk. It is understood that the vessel is being towed to Spain, where she will be scrapped. Our surveyor considers insufficient opening up of boiler was done to properly establish extent of damage.

8/9/71: STEEL CHEMIST left Hampton Roads for Bilbao in tow of German tug HAMBURG.

Disposition Date	Comments
1971	Delivered with boiler damage to Spanish Shipbreakers, having left Hampton Roads in tow 8/9/71. Arrived Bilbao 8/30/71. Demolition commenced at Bilbao during 12/71 by Hierros Ardes. Scrapped 12/71 Bilbao. Reported 9/71: Sold to Spain for Scrapping.

The information on this page is the kind contribution of **Skip Lewis**. Skip, whose dad sailed for Isthmian, is an avid collector and researcher of everything Isthmian. In his quest, he has used many sources and publications including Lloyd's of London and Imperial Steel by John Atherton. Thank you, Skip. Copyright © 2003 - All rights reserved.